

Personalizing the Impersonal: Where Can You Add a Touch of Fun?

written by Lori Jo Vest

We use the Constant Contact, an email marketing and contact management online program, to create and distribute our “Who’s Your Gladys?” newsletter. It’s an affordable, efficient way to maintain our database of fans, and the user interface is user-friendly for non-techies.

While you’d think that working with a website, with no contact with “real people,” would be impersonal, Constant Contact has managed to create a friendly service that feels personal. Quick example – every time I log in to create our monthly e-news (which you can sign up for on our website at www.whosyourgladys.com, by the way), I get a welcome screen while the site loads that says:

Thank you!

You’re awesome! We appreciate your business.

How fun is that? Every time I log in, I smile. How could you take a similar approach with your impersonal, but necessary, communications, like your website, invoices or auto-responder emails? Here are a few suggestions:

Have fun. In emails and in other written communication, express enthusiasm for your customers with exclamation points, color and fun language. I know that the Constant Contact people don’t know if I’m “awesome,” though the fact that they put it on the first page I see is entertaining and demonstrates their enthusiasm for our business. Don’t be afraid of fun. More people will enjoy it than not.

Be real. Social media has helped create a more casual and authentic approach in business. Stuffy, formal language should be limited to contracts and other legal documents. Some sales trainers even advise that you “fun up” your letters with handwritten notes scribbled in the side margins or use colorful highlighters to call attention to the most important parts.

Take risks. Having fun with your business communication can feel a bit awkward for some of us, who may have started our careers when the business environment required suits and formality. Times have changed and customers want authenticity in their business relationships – whether they’re buying flowers for a wedding, widgets for their factory, or an email marketing solution. Don’t be afraid to show your company’s positive personality to build a stronger customer relationship.

What do you think? How could you “fun up” your previously impersonal communication with your customers?

2012 Copyright Lori Jo Vest

Co-author of the customer service bestseller, "Who's your Gladys? How to Turn Even the Most Difficult Customer into Your Biggest Fan," Lori Jo Vest has been involved in relationship-based sales and customer service for over 20 years. She has developed extensive marketing, sales and customer service expertise through her work in business-to-business sales and marketing positions. She consults with mid-sized and second stage businesses on methods to enhance their sales and customer service efforts through one-on-one awareness campaigns, methods for developing personal connection and custom strategies for long-term relationship building. You can reach Lori at lori@loriinvest.com.

To access additional free customer service resources - including blog articles and video tips - visit www.whosyourgladys.com.